

COMMENTARY

STALIN BUILDS A TROJAN HORSE AGAINST AMERICA

Warning: Another "Popular Front" in the Making

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM

ON OCTOBER 15, 1952, Joseph Stalin told the 19th Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union that it was now the task of Com-

IN COMMENTARY'S first issue seven years ago this month, soon after the close of World War II, we said editorially that we would consider it a prime obligation—under the charter granted us by the American Jewish Committee—to bring our readers information and sober analysis on that greatest threat to human freedom in man's history: the force, we called it, "more destructive than the [just invented] atom bomb itself"—totalitarian terrorism. How well we have covered this journalistic "beat" we leave it to our readers to judge. In any case, we have worked our hardest at the complex job of exposing the monster with the two heads—fascism and Communism. Here, at another critical juncture in the interminable assaults on freedom that mankind has suffered during the past four decades, we bring reports from two of our most knowledgeable contemporary recorders of totalitarian designs and maneuvers. MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM writes of the meaning of the new Communist "popular front," and L. POLIAKOV reports (page 413) on the revived international conspiracy of fascism. Their news, while not happy, is not meant to be alarmist: from a clear view of the facts, we may hope to take the proper measures to meet the danger. During 1947 and 1948 Mr. Goldbloom wrote a monthly review of world events, "The Month in History," for COMMENTARY. Subsequently, he went abroad to serve with the ECA in Greece, whence he returned some months ago.

munists abroad to "raise the banner of bourgeois democratic freedoms" and "the banner of national independence," and to become "patriots of your country," in order "to rally around you the majority of the people." (It is perhaps superfluous to mention that this advice was *not* intended to apply to the Communist parties of Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria.) Thus Stalin put the seal of his personal approval on a line which had been developing gradually for well over a year, and which had given rise to new "popular fronts," and attempts to form them, in many countries throughout the world.

The new line has been introduced at slightly different times, and in somewhat different forms, in the various parts of the world. Like all Communist lines, it is designed above all to buttress and extend the power of Stalin's regime. When Communists unite or try to unite with non-Communist forces, the unity they propose is always directed *against* something or somebody. When the world Communist movement calls for unity, its target is the main enemy of the USSR at the moment. In the 30's, the Popular Front was directed against Nazi Germany; today the new "popular front" is directed primarily against the United States. It is intended to split the free world by exploiting those "internal contradictions" with-

in it on which Stalin laid so much emphasis in his recent report to the Soviet Communist party. As always, there is a flexibility of tactic: the specific nature of the contradictions seen as existing in each country will determine the exact maneuver to be used toward achieving the central objective, which is that of separating the rest of the free world from the United States.

In Asia and Africa, where anti-Europeanism is widespread, the Communist parties are to win the confidence of the native nationalists, do everything possible to intensify their differences with the European powers and, above all, make anti-Europeanism the fuel for anti-Americanism. In Europe, the Communist appeal will be to wounded national pride and the resentment against dependence on America; also to the reluctance of all classes to make sacrifices for the sake of military security and to the carefully nurtured fear of a war in which Europe would be "an American cat's-paw" and a Russo-American battleground.

In the United States the problem is more complex: the American Communist party may agree with Senator Capehart in demanding that we end the war in Korea by accepting the Chinese terms, but it is hardly likely that this will create unity of action between Communists and Republican isolationists. It may be that the Kremlin has not yet figured out in detail what tactics the American Communists are to employ in the next "period"; as has happened before, this question may not even have a high priority in its planning.

THE new popular front line first showed up on the international horizon in several colonial and semi-colonial countries. As early as March 17, 1950, the Cominform organ, *For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy*, reported that the Communist party of Indonesia had initiated a united front with the Socialist party and the Workers' party there "to preserve the independence of Indonesia." On April 14 of the same year it carried an article by Kyuichi Tokuda, secretary-general of the Japanese

Communist party, in which he declared: "A democratic national front of all strata of the people, including that of national capital, is essential."*

Tokuda went on to tell how the Japanese Communists were trying to build a political alliance with the Farmer-Labor and Socialist parties. And the May 26 issue of the same magazine reported that the Cuban Communists (who call themselves the Popular Socialist party) had made electoral alliances with a number of other parties in that country's municipal elections.

At this time, however, the European Communists were still following the "left" line which had been firmly established since 1947. Thus in the February 1950 elections for the British Parliament, there were over a hundred Communist candidates, and party secretary Harry Pollitt declared: "On these basic things, the right-wing Labor leaders do not differ from the Tories." And in April of the same year Etienne Fajon told the congress of the French Communist party that its task was "political struggle against the bourgeois state."

THIS radical line dated back to 1946 and 1947, when it became clear that the post-war "governments of national union" that had

*It is worth pointing out that there has been considerable discussion in Communist party literature in the past on the fine distinctions between "united front" and "popular front." The first term was used in the 20's to refer to alliances with Socialist parties and trade unions entered into in an attempt to overcome the isolation forced on the Communists when they split off to set up their own parties and trade unions. The "united front" served mainly as a way of exposing members of the Socialist organizations to Communist influence and propaganda. The term "popular front" referred to a broader alliance of all anti-fascist parties, whether working-class or middle-class, and its aim was less to build up the Communist party by raiding other leftist parties than to influence the foreign policies of the Western nations in an anti-Nazi and pro-Soviet direction. Still later, as the Marxist inhibitions on the full freedom of Communist maneuver were left further and further behind, the term "national front," or "patriotic front," was used to refer to alliances which included even right-wing groups. It is this last type of "popular front" that the Communists are now attempting to forge.

sprung up throughout Europe for varying periods after the liberation would not turn into "people's democracies" except where the Red Army was present. In one Western European country after another, the Communists found themselves on the outside looking in. Usually it happened because they overestimated their own strength and precipitated a showdown for which they were not ready. Once this had happened, there was no returning to the previous state of conjugal bliss. Events in Eastern Europe offered too clear a warning to be disregarded by even the most trusting Western politician.

At the same time postwar Europe appeared to offer excellent prospects for a "revolutionary" line. The shift from a war to a peace economy, occurring in a partly devastated and wholly disrupted continent, could reasonably be expected to produce promisingly troubled waters in which to fish. The United States seemed likely to return to its normal insular concerns; in 1946 many Americans were far more troubled by the aggressions of the OPA than those of the Kremlin; they wanted the boys home and the tax-burdensome armies and navies reduced—as they were. And there were few political forces in Western Europe with any clear alternative program to offer.

Hence the Communists initiated mass strikes and demonstrations designed to intensify class conflicts and further undermine tottering economies. Parliamentary opposition became parliamentary obstruction—the more effective because only too often the governments in office had little in the way of positive policy to be obstructed. In 1947 the "revolutionary" line showed notable signs of success in both France and Italy, while in Greece, Communist guerrillas dominated the countryside within even a few miles of Athens, the capital.

In accordance with Stalinist custom, the "revolutionary" line was applied more or less mechanically, whether it fitted the circumstances or not. If the Kremlin had good reason to gamble on successful revolutions in France, Italy, and Greece, even the rosier-colored glasses could not reveal the same

prospects for Britain or the Scandinavian countries. Yet the Communist parties of those countries dutifully went out on the revolutionary limb—and thereby rapidly isolated themselves from the rather considerable peripheral followings they had acquired during the war and immediate postwar periods.

In Asia the postwar "left" line took the form of armed revolts in one country after another. But if China was ripe for Communist seizure, India was not. The attempted Communist putsch in Hyderabad, and Communist riots in other parts of India, probably did more to disillusion intellectual sympathizers than to win mass support. In Indonesia and Burma the Communist party gave up positions of substantial influence in order to stage futile, if troublesome, armed revolts. In Malaya they sacrificed control of an effective urban trade union movement in order to start a guerrilla war on the countryside. In the Philippines the Huk leader, Luis Taruc, who had come in to Manila and taken his seat in the senate under an agreement with the government, returned to the hills and took up arms again. In South Korea the Communists attempted to seize power by force after boycotting the elections. And in Japan, the first of a long series of riots and political strikes took place.

BUT neither in Europe nor in Asia did this radical line achieve the results the Communists had hoped for. It was successful in picking off the ripe—and luscious—plums of Czechoslovakia and China, and it certainly created a great deal of grief elsewhere. But it also drew a clear line between Communists and anti-Communists and thereby set a boundary beyond which no advance was possible short of full-scale war. In Italy the Communist bloc failed to win power in the 1948 elections, and each successive political strike aroused less enthusiasm than the one before. In France, too, the workers showed an increasing unwillingness to let themselves be sacrificed for the sake of the Communist party. In Germany the blockade of Berlin was frustrated by the airlift, and Communist strength dwindled to the vanish-

ing point. At the same time Tito's defection in Yugoslavia undermined the morale of the entire Communist movement, and the gradually increasing effect of Marshall aid checked the West European economic decay on which the Communists had hoped to feed. By the end of 1949, the Kremlin had good reason to consider a change of tactics.

As we have seen, this change began to make its appearance in colonial countries first. This may have been because the basic, long-term Communist line has always been more conciliatory to non-Communist circles in such countries, even when the temporary line is furthest "left." It may also be partly attributable to the greater readiness of colonial peoples to forgive and forget—if they ever knew about—the sins of Soviet imperialism, because of the more immediately present sins of the West.

In Europe the first sign that a new approach was in the offing came with the Stockholm Peace Congress in the middle of March 1950. Just as in the case of the Popular Front of the 30's (heralded in 1934 by the Amsterdam Conference Against War), the requirements of Soviet foreign policy were translated into the most universally acceptable of all slogans—peace. In the campaign for the Stockholm Appeal an attempt was made to draw in all sorts of groups and individuals toward whom the Communists had only shortly before been expressing undying antagonism. (Only two months before, in December 1949, a Cominform resolution had declared that working-class unity could only be attained by "irreconcilable and consistent struggle in theory and practice against the right-wing Socialists and reactionary trade union leaders.") In most countries, however, the Communists as a political organization still continued to vilify the people whose support was being sought by them as peace-lovers. This kind of "cultural lag" is frequently to be seen when the Communist line changes; it is probably due in part to the fact that even Communists are not quite automatons, and partly to the Kremlin's tendency to give the old line one last spin while already experimenting with

the new. (This might help to explain the plunge in Korea at a time when the drive for the Stockholm Appeal was already in full swing.)

The European country in which the Stockholm Appeal received the broadest support was Italy, where Palmiro Togliatti had at no time been really eager to risk his powerful organization in radical adventures. Apparently because he led the largest Communist party in the free world, he had been able to modify the radical Moscow line sufficiently to permit him to keep some of his bridges unburned. These now served him in good stead, and the Italian signers of the Appeal included such figures as the Republic's first president, Enrico De Nicola, the Christian Democratic president of the chamber of deputies, Giovanni Gronchi, and former Premiers Ivanoe Bonomi, Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, and Francesco Nitti.

BUT "unity for peace" was still a very limited and one-sided type of unity. The Communists began to feel the urgent need of the *support* of definite non-Communist *political forces*, not simply of humanitarian expressions. But the only form of "unity" they proposed was still one of Communist control. Even when on July 4, 1950, Maurice Thorez called for a "government of democratic unity" for the defense of "peace and freedom," it was not clear whether this represented anything more than an invitation to everybody to unite behind the Communist party.

Elsewhere, however, the new line began to take the form of a demand for a "national front" in which the Communists offered to range themselves beside other parties—as long as they were anti-American, or at least neutralist. In July 1950 the Costa Rican Communists—known as the Popular Vanguard party—who had been suppressed after their unsuccessful attempt at an armed *coup* in 1948, called for the formation of a "national front" to defend the country's "independence" against Yankee imperialism. Costa Rican memories were not, however, short enough for this call to find any im-

mediate response. At the same time the Uruguayan Communist party was proposing a "united front of all progressive forces," only to be turned down. A little later, more of the Asian parties fell into line. In October the Thai (Siamese) Communists issued a call for a "national democratic front" against the government of Pibul Songgram. At about the same time the Nepal Communists—who were still engaged in a guerrilla revolt—made a similar appeal addressed specifically to the Nepal National Congress, which was part of the government against which they were fighting. In December 1950 the Ceylon Communists spelled the line out in a little more detail: not only did they decide to create a "Popular Democratic Front," but they condemned those "left sectarians" who wanted a "socialist revolution." And in the same month the Communists of Ecuador went so far as to declare: "Notwithstanding the utterly incorrect foreign policy pursued by the Galo Plaza government—a policy constantly criticized by the Communist party of Ecuador—we are resisting the attempts of the reactionary elements to overthrow this government."

IN EUROPE, the new line began to make headway with the return of Palmiro Togliatti from Moscow at the end of February 1951. On March 19 he specifically offered to back any regime in Italy which would withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty; he repeated this offer at the Communist party congress on April 3. Stating his readiness to "abandon opposition to a government that would pursue a peace policy," he proposed the constitution of the Italian Republic as the "political platform for the peace movement and for transforming the economic and social structure of the country." And he made his meaning still clearer on April 15, when he declared: "Let us do everything possible and take such peaceful measures as will wrest Italy from the front of those who are deliberately preparing another war. . . . In order to do this, the advent of Communists to power is not even necessary; all that is needed for a policy of peace is to be demo-

cratic and healthy-minded. The Communists will not create any difficulties, they will never place any obstacles in the way of a government that would pursue such a policy."

At the same time other European parties were making the shift. As early as February 1951 the British Communist party called for unity behind a "People's Government"—while still lambasting the leaders of the Labor party as tools of the Americans—and in April it instructed its local groups to propose united action in the local elections to the Labor party organizations, and to make it clear that they would give full support to Labor candidates where no Communists were running. In February, too, the German Communists offered conditional support to Social Democratic candidates in Bundestag by-elections, but were rebuffed. And in March, Léon Feix, a member of the Central Committee of the French Communist party, wrote: "The French Communist party has declared that French Communists will support any movement, any party, and any individual that, in the overseas territories, helps to weaken the imperialist camp—the camp of the warmongers." In June another Central Committee member, Georges Cogniot, pledged his party's support to any French government which would call for a five-power pact, peace in Viet Nam and Korea, a united and demilitarized Germany, laws against war propaganda, outlawing of the atom bomb, reduction of armaments, "rejection of agreements which run counter to national independence," improvement of the standard of living with the savings resulting from military cuts, and preservation of democratic liberties.

THIS was a true "national front" platform, avoiding any proposal that might agitate even the most conservative party. It is to be noted that all but two of the planks in this platform are concerned with foreign policy, and that the policy they spell out is one of pro-Soviet neutrality rather than of outright support of the Soviet Union. (It is particularly interesting that

there is no mention of restoring the Franco-Soviet alliance that De Gaulle negotiated at the end of the war; the Soviet Union apparently has a realistic appreciation of the maximum for which it can hope in Western Europe today.) And of the two planks dealing with domestic affairs, one represents little more than a call for the preservation of the legal status quo, while the other (improvement of the standard of living)—granted its presupposition, a reduction in armaments—would meet with no objection from anyone. Yet it is clear now that there was less eagerness among the Communists in France than in Italy to adopt the new line; both the delay in promulgating it, and the contrast between the beautiful simplicity of Togliatti's generalizations and the painstaking detail of Cogniot's proposals, indicate this. And this reluctance, or resistance, appears to have persisted for over a year. It was reflected in the greater frequency and militancy of political strikes and demonstrations in France as compared to Italy, and in the absence of any attempt to secure a united front, even locally, with Socialists and Popular Republicans in the French local and parliamentary elections. (Such an attempt would undoubtedly have failed in at least the great majority of cases; but such considerations do not deter Communists from following a line.)

When Etienne Fajon condemned his comrades last June for repelling prospective allies by their tactics, he was not so much promulgating a new policy as bringing pressure to bear for the obedient execution of one already adopted but only reluctantly and inadequately carried out. This, too, explains the punishment the French Communist party administered to its old leaders, André Marty and Charles Tillon, in September 1952. This was not the case of a new line requiring a scapegoat in the persons of people intimately associated with the old one; rather, Marty (who had been named acting secretary-general of the party as late as the end of May 1952) and Tillon appear to have disapproved of the new line and conducted a stubborn and reckless, and

largely successful, delaying action against it.

Some resistance to the new line also appears to have been manifested in Western Germany, since it did not get into full swing there until after an open letter from the East German Socialist Unity party calling on the Communists and Social Democrats of the West to get together in a "joint struggle for peace and against remilitarization." In September 1951, after receiving this letter, the West German Communists announced their intention of acting in accordance with its recommendations, and confessed their own previous sectarianism. The meaning which they attributed to the new line became clear when, in a series of local and by-elections, they gave unconditional—and unwanted—support to Social Democratic candidates, although continuing to denounce the Social Democratic leaders as betrayers of the German workers and tools of the Americans.

NEVERTHELESS, since the summer of 1951, and except for the special case of France, attempts to set up the new national fronts have proceeded energetically in country after country. The Indian Communists pursued the new "popular front" tactics in the recent election, and in the subsequent parliamentary alignments in the national and state legislatures. (In the legislature of the Patiala and East Punjab States Union, they succeeded in overthrowing the Congress party cabinet by joining forces with the conservative Akali Sikh party). In Algeria, in August 1951, the Communists were able to get themselves accepted in a joint "Algerian Front in Defense of Freedom" together with the progressive nationalist Party of the Manifesto and the extremist nationalists led by Messali Hadj. In Greece the illegal Communist party operates through a front called the Union of the Democratic Left (EDA) that has tried to join the center coalition in the forthcoming elections (these will take place on November 16). But although the center had extended its alliances almost all the way both to the right and left in order to make sure of victory, it rejected EDA's

bid. In the 1951 British general elections, the Communist party sharply restricted the number of its candidates and called for support of Labor candidates in other constituencies "to facilitate working-class unity." In August 1951 the Burmese Communists offered to end their revolt if they were taken into a coalition government. In Mexico the Communists sought to build a united front of all the groups against the government Party of Revolutionary Institutions in the 1952 presidential and congressional elections, and they succeeded in enlisting under the banner of the conservative General Henriquez Guzman. To do this, the Communists had to break with long-time party-liner Vicente Lombardo Toledano, who refused to give up his own candidacy. But the maneuver paid off; the alliance between the Communists and Henriquez Guzman was enough of a political threat to induce the government to postpone ratification of a defense agreement with the United States.

It would be possible to give additional instances from other countries. But the cases already cited appear sufficient to indicate that the Communists of the world have now substantially accomplished another important about-face.

LIKE that of the 30's, the new popular front springs from Soviet fears of isolation and encirclement. In the earlier period a "revolutionary" line had resulted in the victory not of Communism but of Hitler; Stalin then became desperately afraid lest the monster he had done so much to create would join forces against him with the Western democracies he had done his best to destroy. Hence he abruptly reversed his policy toward the latter. The Communists, and their collaborators and dupes, who had been vociferously denouncing the "sham" of "bourgeois democracy" and the "fascism" of Roosevelt, accordingly became the most vociferous champions of the one and idolaters of the other. The true worth of this conversion became clear in 1939, when the Stalin-Hitler pact made fascism "a matter of taste" and restored the Western democracies to their pristine role of

imperialist aggressors. For, however anxious Stalin had been to split the front of those whom he regarded as potential enemies, and ready to build an alliance with what he considered their weaker section, he far preferred an alliance with the stronger and more dangerous section. True, he guessed wrong both as to where the superior strength lay and as to the enduring value of an alliance with Hitler. But his basic approach to the problem—the opposite of the British balance-of-power approach—is not likely to have been changed by one mishap.

Today the United States plays exactly the same role in the Stalinist cosmos that belonged to Hitler's Reich between 1935 and 1939. As indicated, the aim of the new popular front is to build up opposition to the Americans, as that of the old one was to create a front against the Nazis. The slogans then were "resistance to aggression" and "defense of democracy." Economic aims had only a secondary place, serving merely as issues on which to mobilize the workers, and could always be sacrificed when the occasion warranted. Today we again see the Communists calling for unity to "smash the aggressors" and "stop the warmongers." Economic demands are raised chiefly as arguments against rearmament. But the Communists now ask far less than in the 30's. Then, they wanted the countries of Western Europe to mobilize *actively* for a crusade against Nazi Germany. Today, they merely want them to deny support to American aims. For, then, Stalin feared *actual* aggression from Hitler, and was looking for military allies to stop it. Today, he knows that there is no real danger that the United States will attack him.

But security against aggression is not enough to satisfy Stalin. The totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union is not able to rest so long as any potential focus of opposition exists, either internally or externally.*

*Peter Meyer, in his article "The Driving Force Behind Soviet Imperialism" (COMMENTARY, March 1952), showed that conflict between industrialization and the inefficiency of a despotic bureaucracy is another force behind the Soviet drive for expansion.—ED.

Its expansion, like its domestic power, aims at totality. This expansion is not tied to a rigid timetable: the Kremlin may call a temporary halt, or even make a tactical withdrawal, when faced with opposition it regards as too strong to be overborne. But the aim of such periods of quiescence is always to prepare the way for new expansion by military and economic preparation, by diplomatic activity, and by the manipulation of foreign Communist parties. Today such a waiting period appears to be on the agenda. Korea has shown the Soviet Union that the time is not yet ripe for further major advances. Stalin knows that on almost every front the close alliance of the United States with the other free countries of the world opposes a barrier to Soviet expansion, whether by military or non-military means. Hence it is his intention to split that alliance.

But if he should succeed in doing this, the 1939 experience would seem to indicate the possibility of another abrupt reversal of front on Stalin's part. For the United States and her possessions do not lie in the immediate path of Soviet expansion. Hence, while the apparent target of the Soviet in its effort to split the free world is the United States, its real objective is the free countries of Europe and Asia. If they succumb to the new popular front, with its brave words about "peace," "national independence," and all the rest, and if the United States is isolated, the Soviet Union may again offer to divide the world with the United States by a "negotiated settlement" offering the bait of long-term peaceful co-existence—as she did immediately after the war. Thus she would seek to repeat again the stroke of 1939 by which she divided up Eastern Europe with Hitler's Germany—but this time, with Germany and Western Europe at her feet, she would be in an infinitely stronger position if she succeeded.

Meanwhile, this gives the American Communist party, and whatever friends and "liberal innocents" it can muster, a role somewhat different from that of Communist parties elsewhere. Here the aim cannot be to stir up anti-American sentiment, nor is

any Communist-inspired "national front" possible; rather, the American Communists must complement the demands of their comrades abroad for "independence" from America by seeking to reinforce isolationist tendencies here. This would seem to be why just before the Republican nominating convention, Robert Taft and Herbert Hoover received a more than respectful hearing in the pages of the *Daily Worker* and *Pravda*.

The nomination of Eisenhower was certainly a grave disappointment to Moscow's "peace forces." (Whether this reaction was justified or not is not at issue here.) At the moment the Communists are trying to salvage a little from an obviously unsatisfactory national election by appealing for the unity of all "progressives" in favor of local "peace candidates." One may doubt, however, whether they take this effort very seriously. Rather, their main current concern is to preserve their organization so that it may in the future still be able to play the role assigned to it. And this task, for the present, seems to be enough to keep their hands full.

THE new popular front thus differs in many ways from that of the 30's. Its immediate aims, as we have seen, are more limited. The climate in which it is being attempted is in many ways much less favorable. In 1934 most Socialists and liberals still thought of Communists as erring brethren, but brethren nevertheless. Today this attitude, while unhappily surviving in many quarters, is much less common.

Soviet Russia's open aggression both under the Stalin-Hitler pact and in the post-war period, the fate of all non-Communist groups in the "People's Democracies," and the incontrovertible evidence of large-scale Communist espionage in Western countries have all had their effect. The slavish defense of Soviet policy by foreign Communist parties has been made more glaring by the nature of that policy; the Yugoslav revolt has served further to highlight the subservient role of other Communist parties.

Events in Eastern Europe have had a particularly sharp effect on West European

Socialists, who have seen their sister parties rooted out in country after country behind the Iron Curtain. Hence their hostility to Communist "unity" offers a greater obstacle to a popular front than in the 30's. Indeed, the new line seems in many ways better calculated to appeal to rightist elements than to Socialists. The emphasis on "national independence" sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish the voice of Thorez from that of De Gaulle. Moreover as Togliatti's statements clearly show, the Communists are currently ready to offer their support without any of the traditional leftist ideological conditions if only their basic foreign policy demands are met. (Thus in Latin America they have recently given support to Perón, and to groups closely linked to him in other countries; he in his turn has been "neutral"—against the United States.)

If the events of recent years have created a gulf between Communists and other groups in Europe there is much more chance, however, that their new line will succeed in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In colonial countries the democratic claims of the West frequently meet a skepticism which is readily comprehensible; totalitarian oppression in Eastern Europe often seems as distant and unreal as Buchenwald once did in Illinois.

At the same time, there is little reason for smugness about Europe: even in England there are still many appeals which the Communists can make with some hope of success. It is inevitable that there should be resentment against American predominance. This leads to a magnification of every American error—and there are American errors. Moreover, the United States is inevitably often forced, by the fact that her aid is a crucial factor in most national and international situations, to act as an arbiter in international and even domestic conflicts. Even if she were to show perfect wisdom and justice on such occasions, she could not avoid incurring the resentment of at least one of the disputants. In practice, both are apt to feel themselves aggrieved. (For example, the U.S.-sponsored compromise on German rearmament has

satisfied neither most Germans nor most Frenchmen; in attempting to play the role of a neutral in the conflict between France on the one hand and Tunisian and Moroccan nationalists on the other, this country has damaged its prestige in both camps.)

The strain of rearmament is a real one for most European countries; it necessarily creates a readiness to seek a different way out. And when the United States asks further sacrifices from European countries at the same time that it cuts its own contribution, Communist propaganda has very substantial material to work on. If the burden of rearmament is thrown almost entirely on low-income groups as a result of lopsided and corrupt systems of taxation (as in France and Italy), this is further grist for the Communist mill. On the other hand, if the United States even ventures to suggest, as we recently did to French Premier Pinay, that a system of taxation should be made more equitable and effective, the Communists can join with the right in raising the banner of "national independence" from American interference.

American economic measures against the Soviet Union also run counter to the immediate interests of large groups in European countries. Our insistence that they cooperate in various types of embargoes strikes not only at national pride, but at pocketbooks. Here again the Communists can hope to find many allies in other sections of the population. Thus in Germany it is among the right-wing parties and their financial backers that pressure for trade with the East in strategic materials has been greatest; in Greece, a deputy belonging to the rightist Greek Rally of Marshal Papagos attended the Moscow economic conference.

ANOTHER potent weapon the Communists can use is the fear of reborn fascism. After all, Soviet totalitarianism is still only a potential threat in the eyes of most West Europeans, whereas the Nazi brand is something of which they have many vivid personal memories. Any American action which seems to threaten a revival of Nazism and

fascism immediately awakens fears on which the Communists can play. This was true of German rearmament, a move that has caused emotional conflicts even among many of those who agreed that it was necessary. It is even truer of every step toward a rapprochement with Franco, not to mention such pieces of idiocy as the recent action of an American agency in Germany in subsidizing a group of former SS "youths." Democracy is not only the basis of our moral position; it is our principal practical argument against Stalinism, and when we compromise our position on it we gratuitously help the Communists to find allies in the very groups which should be our strongest supporters.

And finally, overriding all else, there is the fear of war. If Stalin can persuade Western Europe that his policy is really one of peace, and that it is the United States which seeks a military showdown, West European Communists will find many allies. For Western Europeans feel in their bones and nerves that their countries would be the battleground of such a war; ever with them is the fearsome anticipation of the atom-bombing of their cities, or a Russian occupation followed by an American liberation at an unspecified future date. Hence, it

would seem obvious, American policy must at all times not only actually be directed to the prevention of war, but must also show that it is.

It does not seem likely that the new Communist line will bring major immediate dividends in Western Europe, although in some colonial and semi-colonial countries it is already proving its value to the Kremlin. But it is a line for the long pull, and Stalin can afford to wait. Asia is the great ripe plum, and Germany, not to speak of the rest of the continent, is still not fully out of reach. The factors which favor the building of an anti-American "popular front" or "national front" can be minimized by a sound American policy; but there is no ground for confidence that we can completely eliminate them all, however wise and benevolent we may be—and we must be both. And certainly any American retreat into isolationism or toward a relaxation of military and economic aid, or any swing to the right domestically and internationally, or any growth in illusion about the Soviets' long-time peaceful nature or intention, would play directly into the hands of the Kremlin. Thus, even at best, the new Communist line will remain a serious threat. The ideological battle for the world bids fair not to be over soon.